

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing a reusable linear access storage medium having a plurality of linearly ordered media blocks, where a particular media block is included in a media set if the media block is used to store at least a portion of one or more linearly ordered data blocks, the method comprising:

creating an active window table to monitor the at least one media block in the media set, the active window table containing a list of media blocks in the media set, an identification of data blocks stored in the listed media blocks, information regarding expiration of data blocks stored in the listed media blocks, and an indication, separate from the expiration information, of a reference media block that is the oldest media block in the list;

Identifying any media blocks listed in the active window table that store only data blocks that have become expired, based on the information contained in the active window table;

~~determining whether any of the identified media blocks is a reference media block;~~

removing any identified media blocks from the active window table;

determining whether any of the identified media blocks is a reference media block;

and

updating, if any of the identified media blocks removed is determined to be a reference media block, the active window table to indicate a different media block as a reference media block that is the oldest media block of the remaining media blocks listed in the active window table.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

adding any identified media blocks to a scratch pool list for future reuse of identified media blocks.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the active window table is a data structure created and updated by a data backup program used with an operating system in a computer system.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying, determining, removing and updating are repeated to manage the storage medium.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a data block expires if an expiration date for the data block has been passed.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the active window table comprises at least one of a data block sequence identifier, a media block identifier, a reference block identifier, a media block sequence identifier, and an expiration date identifier.
7. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
updating the media block sequence identifier for each media block in the media set, where the media block sequence identifier indicates the sequential order of the media block used to store at least a portion of one data block in the reusable storage medium.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether an additional data block can be stored in a most recent media block in the media set.
9. (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising:
storing, if the additional data block can be stored in the most recent media block in the first set, the additional data block in the most recent media block.
10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, further comprising:

selecting, if an available storage memory in the most recent media block is insufficient to store the additional data block, an additional media block from a scratch pool list;

confirming an allocation of the selected media block; and
storing the additional data block in the allocated media block.

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing a linear access reusable storage medium having a plurality of linearly ordered media blocks, where a particular media block is included in a media set if the media block is used to store at least a portion of one linearly ordered data block, the apparatus comprising:

a memory for storing a data backup program, an active window table, and an operating system, wherein the active window table contains a list of media blocks, information regarding expiration of data blocks stored in the media blocks, and indication, separate from the expiration information, of a reference media block that is the oldest media block in the list;

a processor for performing a method upon executing the data backup program with the operating system, the method comprising:

identifying, based on the expiration information, any media blocks in the active window table that store only data blocks that have become expired;

~~determining whether any of the identified media blocks is a reference media block;~~

removing any identified media blocks from the active window table;

determining whether any of the identified media blocks is a reference media block;

and

updating, if any of the identified media blocks removed is determined to be a the reference media block, the active window table to indicate a different media block as a reference media block.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the method further comprises:

adding any identified media blocks to a scratch pool list for future reuse of identified media blocks.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the identifying, determining, removing and updating are repeated to manage the storage medium.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the active window table comprises at least one of a data block sequence identifier, a media block identifier, a reference block identifier, a media block sequence identifier, and an expiration date identifier.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the method further comprises:
updating the media block sequence identifier for each media block in the media set, where the media block sequence identifier indicates the sequential order of the media block used to store at least a portion of one data block in the reusable storage medium.

16. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium storing a software program that, when executed by a computer, causes the computer to perform a method for managing a linear access reusable storage medium having a plurality of linearly ordered media blocks, where a particular media block is included in a media set if the media block is used to store at least a portion of one linearly ordered data block, the method comprising:

creating an active window table to monitor the at least one media block in the media set, the active window table containing a list of media blocks in the media set, an identification of data blocks stored in the listed media blocks, information regarding expiration of data blocks stored in the listed media blocks, and an indication, separate from the expiration information, of a reference media block that is the oldest media block in the list;

identifying any media blocks in the active window table that store only data blocks that have become expired, based on the information contained in the active window table;

~~determining whether any of the identified media blocks is a reference media block;~~

removing any identified media blocks from the active window table;

determining whether any of the identified media blocks is a reference media block;

and

updating, if any of the identified media blocks removed is determined to be a reference media block, the active window table to indicate a different media block as a reference media block.

17. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 16 wherein the method further comprises:

adding any identified media blocks to a scratch pool list for future reuse of identified media blocks.

18. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 17 wherein the active window table is a data structure created and updated by a data backup program used with an operating system in a computer system.

19. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 16 wherein the identifying, determining, removing and updating are repeated to manage the storage medium.

20. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 16 wherein a data block expires if an expiration date for the data block has been passed.

21. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 16 wherein the active window table comprises at least one of a data block sequence identifier, a media block

identifier, a reference block identifier, a media block sequence identifier, and an expiration date identifier.

22. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein the method further comprises:

updating the media block sequence identifier for each media block in the media set, where the media block sequence identifier indicates the sequential order of the media block used to store at least a portion of one data block in the reusable storage medium.

23. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 16 wherein the method further comprises:

determining whether an additional data block can be stored in a most recent media block in the media set.

24. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 23 wherein the method further comprises:

storing, if the additional data block can be stored in the most recent media block in the first set, the additional data block in the most recent media block.

25. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 23 wherein the method further comprises:

selecting, if an available storage memory in the most recent media block is insufficient to store the additional data block, an additional media block from the a scratch pool list;

confirming an allocation of the selected media block; and
storing the additional data block in the allocated media block.